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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 0007
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE 0010
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3088
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 2175
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STATE FOR EAP/MLS, IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2016

TAGS: PREL AORC UNGA CB

SUBJECT: CAMBODIA: PM SUPPORTS GUATEMALA FOR UNSC SEAT

Classified By: Acting DCM Margaret McKean; Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Cambodia government recently informed the Embassy that it would support Guatemala in the October 16 election for the GRULAC rotational seat on the UNSC. The Japanese Ambassador raised the issue with PM Hun Sen during an unrelated September 29 meeting. The RGC had hoped for a vote trade with Guatemala and the United States, but has opted to support Guatemala with or without any vote trade.
End Summary.

Cambodia to Support Guatemala

¶2. (C) On September 27, the Ambassador, DCM, and Pol/Econ Chief met with PM advisor Om Yentieng to discuss Cambodia's position on the upcoming UNSC vote scheduled for October 16. The Ambassador stressed the importance of the issue to the USG and noted Venezuela's disruptive behavior in international gatherings, including the recent UNGA meetings.

The USG was aware that Cambodia had been leaning towards Venezuela last year, but the Ambassador hoped that discussions between the RGC and the Embassy over the past months had convinced Cambodia to support Guatemala. Om Yentieng took careful notes and promised to provide a response to the Ambassador before the latter's departure for the United States on October 1.

¶3. (C) In the meantime, we also approached the Japanese Ambassador, who had an unrelated meeting with the PM on Friday, September 29, and asked that he also raise the issue with Hun Sen. Ambassador Takahashi told us afterwards that the PM had indicated a willingness to support Guatemala, but was hoping for a vote trade -- as Venezuela had offered. On September 30, Om Yentieng contacted the Ambassador to clarify that the PM had signaled his intention to support Guatemala, irrespective of any quid pro quo. The RGC, he noted, had delayed announcing for either country in the hopes of gaining vote trade agreements from both Guatemala and the United States. (Note: We have told the Cambodian government on several occasions that we don't engage in vote trades. End Note.) The PM decided, however, that the RGC would support Guatemala even if there is no vote trade, and wanted to pass that message to the Ambassador before his departure for the United States.

Comment

¶4. (C) The RGC's decision to support Guatemala is welcome

news, and we have informally expressed our gratitude to the government for their support. The PM's responsiveness to the Ambassador's request is another indication of Hun Sen's willingness to accept USG counsel -- even when others (e.g., his Foreign Ministry) in his government were inclined to support Venezuela. If appropriate, we suggest that the US Mission in New York brief their Guatemalan counterparts and alert them to Cambodia's desire for a vote trade. We believe that if such a vote trade could be arranged, it would be useful insurance in maintaining RGC support through multiple voting rounds. End Comment.

CAMPBELL